

## **What Happened to Telling Each Other Everything? by maplestreet83**

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**Summary:**

The gate is closed, the monsters are gone and it's time to go back home. Mike and Nancy reflecting on everything that has been going on during the past few days and the past year. They had promised to tell each other everything. So what happened?

## What Happened to Telling Each Other Everything?

Mike leaned his head against the cool window of the car, watching as the yellow glow of a streetlight passed them by in the dark. It was just after one in the morning and he could feel the adrenaline slowly draining from him, being replaced by heavy exhaustion and a dull pain on his side that he had fell on in the tunnels. The same exhaustion could be felt all around the police car as Hopper drove along Maple Street, Nancy on the passenger's seat also gazing out the window. They had dropped off Lucas a moment before and were now nearing the Wheeler residence. When Hopper had returned from the lab, carrying a passed out El in his arms, Mike had done his damnedest to fight him to let him stay at the Byers house to wait for her to wake up.

“Calm down, kid. I will let you know as soon as she wakes up. But I need to take you and your sister home. Your parents must be sick from worry, you’ve been away for what? Two days now?” the chief had said, trying to keep his determined voice low not to wake up El and Will.

“He’s right, Mike,” Nancy had said, taking a step toward the two of them. “You need some rest, we both do. We’ll come back tomorrow.” Mike had scowled at his sister before turning back to the chief of police.

“How can I know you won’t take her away again? What reason do I have to trust you?” he had spat out, glaring up at the much taller man. Hopper had massaged his brow in thought, saying:

“I get why you’re worried, Mike, I do. But I swear I won’t take her anywhere without letting you know. You think she’ll let me do that? I’m not really trying to get myself killed here.” Mike had looked down at his fidgeting hands. Hopper was right, he did need to sleep, and as much he thought his parents were useless, they deserved to know where him and Nancy were.

“You promise to call me as soon as she wakes up?” Mike had asked, looking back up at Hopper, seriousness in his tired dark eyes.

“I promise,” he had said with a nod, honesty in his low voice. Mike had nodded back and the chief had sighed, putting on his hat and walking over to the kitchen table where Lucas and Dustin were dozed off, leaning their arms and heads on the table, Max sitting beside them, leaning her chin on her hand as she was also zoning out.

“Okay, I’ll take the Wheelers and Sinclair. Henderson and...what’s your name again?” Hopper had asked, pointing over at the group sitting around the table.

“Max,” she had said, sitting back up straight, nudging at Lucas’ shoulder to wake him up.

“Yeah, okay. So you and Dustin can go with Harrington,” he had continued, looking over at Steve who had been sitting on a counter, holding a bag of ice up to his face.

“What exactly are we gonna tell our parents?” Lucas had asked, stifling a yawn as all of them started to head out the door.

“Hi mom, sorry I’m late four hours after the curfew, I was busy fighting interdimensional monsters?” he had said in a mocking voice as they walked out to the yard. Hopper had paused to lit a cigarette, taking in a drag with his brow knit in thought before answering:

“Leave the explanations to me. Tell them that I’ll call them tomorrow. I’ll come up with something by then.”

“Here we are,” Hopper said with a tense sigh as he pulled up to the Wheeler’s driveway. As Nancy opened the door, Mike could see the chief’s face through the rearview mirror in the bright light. He clearly was not looking forward to this. Mike climbed out of the backseat and followed Hopper to the back of the car, taking his bike from the chief as he picked it up from the trunk. The three of them walked along the paved driveway, Mike walking the bike toward the garage, Nancy nervously biting her lip and shoving her hands into her coat pockets in the cold November air, Hopper sighing as he put out his cigarette. When they reached the door, Hopper took off his hat and scratched the back of his neck, taking a second to think before

ringing the doorbell.

“You two leave the talking to me, okay,” he said in a low and serious voice and the two siblings nodded their heads as they saw a light turn on in the hallway.

Mrs. Wheeler opened the door, her eyes frantic as she saw them standing at the doorway.

“Nancy, Michael! Where have you been?” she started, her eyes growing wider as she noticed Hopper.

“Chief Hopper! Good evening, wh-what is this? Have they been in trouble? Has this got something to do with what happened last year?” she asked, surprise and disbelief on her face.

“Evening, Mrs. Wheeler,” Hopper answered in a tired voice. “I assure you, your kids are not in trouble, everything is alright and they’re safe.”

“So it does have to do with the incident last year! What is going on? Where have you been?” Mrs Wheeler continued, her voice getting louder as she put her hands on her hips.

“Mrs Wheeler, please understand that I can’t give you any more details right now. All you need to know is that your kids have not done anything wrong and they need some rest. I will call...” Hopper explained as Mrs Wheeler’s eyes went to examine her children’s faces more thoroughly. Taking a step forward, she reached her hand to touch Mike’s hair that was messy and dirty with gasoline, dirt and the slime from the tunnels.

“What happened to you two? Michael, what is this?” she asked, panic raising to her voice as she looked from his bloodshot eyes to Nancy, whose face was still gleaming with sweat and who smelled of smoke.

“Mrs. Wheeler,” Hopper repeated, in a louder voice this time and she turned to look at him, her lips pursed.

“I’m sorry but I can’t tell you any more right now. You are right, this has to do with what happened last year and, and so it requires a same level of discretion. I’m sure you understand,” he continued, trying to

sound calmer. Mrs Wheeler nodded, taking a step back and tugging on the belt of her bathrobe. Hopper sighed, looking over at Mike and Nancy, signalling with a nod of his head for them to get inside. They complied, stepping in through the door, Mrs Wheeler immediately wrapping her arms around both of them.

“I will call you tomorrow, when there are more details,” Hopper said, putting his hat back on. He aimed his words to Mrs Wheeler but took a quick glance at Mike as the boy looked back at him, his eyes serious and sharp.

“Until then, good night, everyone,” he concluded, raising his hand slightly and turning to leave.

“Goodnight, chief,” Mrs Wheeler answered and just like that he was gone and she quietly shut the door behind him. Mike headed toward the stairs the second the door closed and Nancy was right behind him.

“What is going on? Nancy! You can tell me!” Mrs Wheeler whispered behind them, her voice tense and worried.

“I am sorry mom,” Nancy said, looking down at her from where she was standing halfway up the stairs.

“Like the chief said, we can’t talk about it. But don’t worry, everything’s okay,” she continued, her voice earnest as she reached over the banister to squeeze her mom’s hand reassuringly. Mrs Wheeler nodded, her face conflicted but relieved.

“I’m glad you’re both home. Go and get cleaned up and get some sleep, okay. If you want I can call the school tomorrow to tell you are staying home for the day? If this is government business again it must be serious,” she suggested.

“Thanks, mom, that would be great,” Nancy said in a relieved voice, letting go of her mom’s hand and heading up the stairs.

“Goodnight, Nance. Love you!” Mrs Wheeler said from behind her, trying to keep her voice low.

“Love you too, mom,” Nancy said back, climbing up the rest of the

steps. She quietly stepped into her room, letting out a sigh of relief and leaning against the door.

Mike shuddered in the cold air as he got out of the shower, water dripping from his hair as he crossed the dark and silent hallway and walked over to his room. Picking up his pyjamas from the bed and pulling them on he felt how blank and drowsy his brain was. All the emotions he had felt during the past 24 hours - fear, anxiety, worry, sadness, relief, happiness, anger, hope - had left him, the only thing left was a cloud of exhaustion that hovered over him. Reaching up to run the towel over his hair to dry it, he heard a faint knock on his door. Turning around he saw Nancy standing in the doorway, also wearing her pyjamas, her hair as wet as his.

“Hi,” she said in a quiet voice, pushing open the door just a bit and walking in, crossing her arms across her chest.

“Hi,” Mike replied, confusion in his voice as he returned to drying his hair. Nancy sat down on his bed, looking around. It seemed so weird, she never spent time in his room.

“You still have that up,” Nancy said with a smile, pointing over to a picture Mike had taped next to his Dark Crystal poster. It was an old one, taken at a family vacation to Florida the year before Holly was born, the whole family posing on the beach, wearing matching colorful flower patterned shirts.

“Oh, yeah I guess,” Mike answered with a shrug, finishing drying his hair and draping the towel over his shoulder. There was a moment of awkward silence as Mike shifted his weight from one foot to another and Nancy picked up pieces of lint from the bedding.

“So, um...” Nancy started, breaking the silence. “I just wanted to ask if you’re okay, if you wanted to talk.”

“Oh,” Mike voiced, sitting down on the bed, a couple feet from Nancy.

“I’m fine, I guess,” he said, awkwardly fidgeting with his hands in his

lap.

“What about you?” he added after a minute. Nancy sighed, leaning her arms behind her to lean on the bed, looking up at the ceiling.

“I’m okay. It’s just that, I don’t know, seeing that whole thing with Will...” she paused, staring blankly ahead.

“I just can’t stop replaying it in my head, you know.” Mike nodded silently. Replaying moments in his head was something he was very familiar with. During that week last November he had played the last conversation he had had with Will in the garage before he disappeared in his head over and over again, wishing there was some way he could’ve prevented everything from happening. And during the past 353 days there had been so many moments with El he had replayed in his mind, from the last time he had seen her, to her laugh on the La-Z-boy to that kiss in the cafeteria.

“I just can’t stop thinking... What if that had been you,” Nancy continued, her voice barely more than a whisper as she kept on staring forward, her eyes glazing over. Mike didn’t know what to say so he looked down at his hands, at the dirt still left under his nails.

“I, I saw how hard it was for Jonathan, and it came so close to us not getting that thing out of Will. And if that had been you... I don’t know if I could have done it. The things it made Will do, the way it made him squirm and scream and...” Nancy said, the images clearly flashing in front of her eyes, her voice getting heavy with terror. Mike reached over, setting his hand over hers.

“Hey, it’s all over now. You got the Mind Flayer out of him. It can’t do that to anyone else ever again,” he assured her, his voice low, looking at her intently. Nancy squeezed her eyes shut and met his gaze, her eyes tired.

“I know. And I know everything’s good now, but... I should have known what was happening with Will, with you. I was so focused on getting revenge on the lab that I had no idea what was happening. And I dragged Jonathan with me too and he couldn’t be here for Will and his mom when they needed him,” Nancy continued, the words of regret pouring out of her as turned on the bed to face Mike.

“Nancy, it’s okay. How could you have known? Will didn’t want anyone to know about it, and everything happened so fast. There’s nothing more you could’ve done,” he continued to reassure her, squeezing her hand. There was a small ghost of smile on her lips as she looked down at their clasped hands. After taking a deep breath she asked:

“What happened to us not lying to each other? To telling each other everything? We never really kept our promise about that.” Mike shrugged.

“I don’t know...After the lab people swarmed the house and made us all promise to shut up about everything that happened...You looked like you moved on. Like you wanted to forget it even happened. So I guess I didn’t want to remind you,” Mike said, his brow furrowed in thought as he looked out the window at the darkness outside. Nancy sighed, running her fingers through her damp hair.

“I tried that for a while. Pretending it never happened. And by the time I realized it didn’t help... I guess I thought it was too late. And so I didn’t talk to you about it,” she said.

There was another moment of silence as they listened to the quiet house, the silence ringing in their ears after all that had happened in the past few hours.

“I heard you once, you know,” Nancy said, lifting her legs up on the bed, settling to sit cross legged.

“Huh?” Mike voiced in confusion, turning to face his sister.

“I think it was in March. I was looking for this one shirt and I thought it was down by the washing machine. So I was opening the door to the basement when I heard you,” Nancy explained, fiddling with the sleeve of her flannel pyjama shirt. The confusion faded away from Mike’s face, being replaced by realization and embarrassment.

“At first I thought you were talking to your nerd friends like usual, but...” Nancy continued, pursing her lips in thought.

“But the way you spoke was different. And I realized who you were

talking to.” Mike could feel a heat spreading to his face as he turned away from Nancy slightly, nodding a bit.

“I didn’t stay and listen to what you were talking about, don’t worry about that,” she reassured him.

“But… I should have been there for you. I should’ve talked to you about it after that. And then with that whole graffiti and plagiarizing thing… I knew why you were acting that way, but I did nothing. I guess I just hoped it would pass if I let you deal with it alone,” Nancy continued with a shrug, her hands falling to her lap. Mike still didn’t know how to respond so he let her speak.

“And now I know I should’ve talked to you. You must have felt so alone. God, I’m such a terrible sister,” she muttered, looking down at her hands.

“Hey, it’s okay,” Mike finally said. “I should’ve let you know what was going on with me. I was just so mad at mom and dad for pretending that nothing had changed, and I thought you agreed with them, so I guess I was mad at you too,” he continued in a low voice, pulling up his legs onto the bed, leaning his folded arms and chin on his knees. Nancy beside him nodded silently, smoothing out the material of her pyjama pants.

“Let’s just agree that we were both stupid,” Nancy said with a small grin after a second of silence. Mike scoffed, nodding his head and looking back at her with a similar grin on his face.

“Just swear we won’t let that happen again, okay?” Nancy continued, her eyes serious and hopeful as she looked over at her brother through the dark room, illuminated only by a desk lamp in the corner.

“Okay,” Mike answered, nodding his head and reaching his hand to shake hers to seal the deal.

“No spit this time?” Nancy asked with a sarcastic grin as she pulled her hand away.

“It’s still not too late for that,” Mike pointed out, loudly hawking,

bringing up spit to his mouth.

“Why do you have to be so gross?” Nancy exclaimed in a whisper, a smile on her disgusted face as she got up from the bed and started to walk toward the door.

“Oh, and Mike?” she remembered, turning back to face him as he had also stood up, setting his towel on the back of a chair.

“Yeah?” he asked in a low voice before yawning loudly. Nancy leaned on the closed door, a small smile rising to her tired face.

“I’m glad that she’s back. I can already see how much happier you are now. And I’m happy for you,” she said quietly, sincerity in her voice. Mike was prepared to launch into defensive excuses, but maybe it was how tired he was, or the talk they had had or how a warmth had spread all over his body just by a mere mention of El, but he shut his mouth.

“Thanks,” he said instead, scratching the back of his head. Feeling such a rush of relief and calm, he continued, a small smile on his face : “I’m happy too.”

Nancy crossed the space between them in few steps and wrapped her arms around her brother, squeezing him affectionately. Mike was surprised at first but returned the hug before Nancy pulled back.

“God, you have to stop growing!” she pointed out with a laugh, ruffling his damp hair before walking back to the door. Mike rolled his eyes at her, secretly excited about reaching her height and turning to finally climb into bed.

“Good night, Mike,” Nancy said, looking back at him through the crack in the door she had just quietly squeezed through.

“Good night, Nance,” he replied, letting out a yawn as after one last small smile Nancy shut the door behind her. Mike got into bed, wrapping the warm blanket around himself, feeling so comfortable after the night sleeping on the hard chair at the lab. The exhaustion soon took over and he fell asleep instantly, and wasn’t plagued by images of demogorgons or otherworldly vines and tunnels, but the anticipation of tomorrow, finally having the whole party together.